



"Oh look, there's another value" - on teaching ethics to science students

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Published in:
EurSafe News

Publication date:
2015

Document version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Citation for published version (APA):
Gjerris, M. (2015). "Oh look, there's another value" - on teaching ethics to science students. *EurSafe News*, 17(1), 4-6.

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Editorial



Dear EurSafe members.

It is my privilege to present to you the first EurSafe newsletter of this year. As you may have noticed, we decided to skip the December issue because of some unforeseeable incidents. The starting point of this issue was a workshop about teaching ethics to veterinarians at the last EurSafe conference in Uppsala. Broadening the topic to teaching ethics in an interdisciplinary setting for this newsletter, it is my pleasure to introduce two contributions on the topic “Teaching ethics”. Additionally Bernice Bovenkerk provides a detailed review of Lori Gruen’s edited anthology *The Ethics of Captivity*, followed by an update of the EurSafe Executive Committee. Besides that you will find a large variety of forthcoming conferences and symposia in the rubric “Upcoming Conferences 2015” as usual. As there were several new publications in the still very young field of “Critical Animal Studies”, the section “new books” is dedicated mainly to this topic.

Before introducing the three articles about “Teaching Ethics”, I first would like to describe the setting in which they occur as an area of tension – in two senses: exciting and challenging. It’s exciting because it seems that teaching ethics in an interdisciplinary context offers a wide research field in which many questions have not been addressed yet. While interdisciplinary work can be demanding in itself, a meta-science like technical didactics for interdisciplinary work seems even more challenging because it has to consider yet another dimension. First of all, we find at least two pluralistic disciplines or systems with different positions, methods and approaches. Secondly, a separate discourse deals with the question how they should interact with each other and which output of different interdisciplinary operation modes can be expected. Therefore, a meta-scientific system of didactics has to be developed that pays attention to the peculiarities of each subsystem, the interdisciplinarity and, additionally, the didactical knowledge of each subsystem.

Most disciplines like philosophy, geography or mathematics are covered by customized technical didactics which merges knowledge of didactics as part of pedagogics or educational science and the particular science. Regarding technical didactics of ethics as a part of

philosophy, it examines normative questions about why, which contents and how ethics should be taught. E.g. the question is asked, if it is legitimate to teach philosophy and ethics in secondary schools. This particular question, which has been an issue since the 19th century, is reviving in specific subjects at universities nowadays. When science and ethics start to get involved with each other in interdisciplinary work or when it is realized that the strict gap between them is artificial – especially in the life sciences – the question of legitimation seems to be only a rhetorical one. As ethics is a pluralistic discipline involving different schools, methods and various aims, there is no straight-forward solution to questions such as why, how, to what extent and what kind of ethical thinking e.g. veterinary students should learn.

This is the starting point of the first contribution by Bernice Bovenkerk. Focusing on different methods for raising awareness of normative aspects in the context of medical ethics and of ethical choices in the practice of scientific research, she provides the a workshop summary about “Teaching non-philosophers about ethics” which took place in Utrecht, the Netherlands, on November 18 last year.

Mickey Gjerris, who teaches bioethical issues at the Faculty of Science at the University of Copenhagen, introduces a student-centered approach – although he doesn’t want to relate his approach to a certain didactic school. This approach aims to take the expertise of students from various fields into account and stresses the advantages of addressing current ethical issues. He explains why asking the banal but not trivial questions “Why, Who and How?” can be a valuable method to integrate ethics into a science.

With these articles we hope to continue the tradition of presenting up-to-date information on the wide variety of topics that are relevant for EurSafe. If you want to contribute to the EurSafe Newsletter don’t hesitate to contact one of the members of the editorial board. The June issue of EurSafe News will center on the EurSafe congress theme: Know your Food.

We wish you a warm spring and hope to see you at the 12th EurSafe congress in Romania!

Samuel Camenzind, issue editor

Bernice Bovenkerk, editor-in-chief

Report



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Teaching non-philosophers about ethics

What should be the role of ethics education to non-philosophy students? Do future professionals need knowledge of moral theories or is the main goal to teach them to reflect on their own practice and become sensitive to moral questions? How can we measure the effectiveness of ethics education? What teaching methods should we use? These are questions that many ethics teachers are struggling with, judging from the large turnout at the meeting that was held on this topic in Utrecht, the Netherlands, on November 18 of this year. The main goal of the meeting organised by the Dutch Association of Bio-ethics was to reflect on new teaching methods, but of course many broader questions arose during the discussions.

Two novel teaching methods were discussed. Firstly, Katrien Cornette

presented the Belgian care ethics 'lab' Stimul, which offers (future) health care professionals a morally loaded experience, in particular an experience of being in a vulnerable position. This is a lab in the true sense of the word, as it simulates a hospital or elderly home which students visit for a day or even two days, including an overnight stay, pretending to be patients. All the care that is given during these days is organised by students themselves as well. The role change that students are required to undergo offers them insight into the vulnerable position of patients and often leads to real eye openers. During a 'feedback carousel' they exchange experiences and insights they have gained. The underlying idea is that 'learning by doing' is more effective than a simple 'learning by information exchange'. Cornette related an interesting example of a managing director of a home for the elderly that had been told during the simulation that he would be helped from the toilet 'soon' and had in fact been left waiting on his own on the toilet for 13 minutes. After this experience he started timing how long patients in his own institution were left on the toilet and sent all the staff to a communication training. He had learned that 'soon' is a very vague term. The teaching methods used in Stimul are termed 'appreciative enquiry' and 'identification'.

A similar, but perhaps less intensive and confronting, teaching method was presented by a nurse with a PhD in ethics, a true experiential expert, Margreet van der Clingel. Her main question is how to give good care to vulnerable people and how to teach nurses to provide such care. In other words, how can we operationalise moral sensitivity? Therefore, the main goal of her teaching is to cultivate moral awareness in nurses. She works a lot with patient experiences and one of her working methods is to ask students to write down patients' life stories and to have them reflect on the question what these life stories mean for them as a professional. They also take a question encountered in practice and turn this into a research question, which they examine during an internship at a hospital. The question that was raised during the meeting is whether these teaching methods could really be typified as ethics teaching. Contemporary opinions about what is good care determine what students are offered in terms of ethics. However, should this be the only way in which moral reflection takes place or should students also be able to reflect on this predetermined moral 'ought'? It was argued that health care professionals do not want to become philosophers, they want to improve care practices. Still, the question remains whether experiential teaching methods can truly be considered ethics education and whether simply creating moral sensitivity is enough to qualify as ethics education?

A second new teaching method that was presented was the 'Integrity Lab' (<http://ori.hhs.gov/TheLab/>). Els Maeckelberghe described this interactive movie, inspired by the American film series 'The Lab', about ethical choices in the practice of scientific research. The main goal of the film is to reflect on and discuss the question what counts as scientific misconduct. The movie is a didactic tool to show students what kind of moral questions can come up when they start to do research. It does not present final answers, but aims to support discussion. With this instrument Maeckelberghe tries to make an integration between principle -based and virtue-based ethical theory and formal and informal teaching styles. The viewer follows a PhD student in a lab and the choices she faces, such as the choice whether or not to give a presentation based on incomplete results. The film starts with such modest questions and does not address issues such as outright fraud immediately. The advantage of using a film is that it can create a safe environment for discussion – 'it is only a film'.

While this is of course an inventive and interesting way of opening up discussion on scientific integrity, a possible shortcoming is that it remains very much in the context of experimental 'lab' science. It cannot be applied for ethics education to veterinary students, for example. At the same time this opens up the discussion about variety of ethics teaching between different disciplines. Bio-ethicist Mariëtte van den Hoven in her contribution argued that we cannot simply create an ethics module to be implemented in teaching to all non-philosophy students. For example, pharmacy students are very different to biology students, and this requires different teaching styles, as well as different ways of testing. How useful is it to have pharmacy or medicine students write an essay, for instance? Van den Hoven, who has just started the Dutch National Network of Ethics Education, in her presentation raised this and many other questions that have yet to be answered. For example, what do we mean by moral competence? And how can we measure what students have really learned? If there is one take home message from this meeting it is that there are many important questions regarding ethics education to non-philosophers that still remain to be answered and that a diversity of perspectives exist within the ethics professions itself. This meeting has provided much needed food for thought; it has kick-started an ongoing and important debate for ethicists.

"Oh look, there's another value" – On teaching ethics to science students



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I work as a bioethicist at a Faculty of Science doing research on the ethical aspects of the human/animal/nature relation and teach ethics, philosophy of science and responsible conduct of research to bachelor, master and Ph.D.-students within areas such as veterinary medicine, biotechnology, natural resources, medicine and animal science.

The following is solely based on the didactical method of TFTAWSAS BSAC (Try, Fail, Try Again With Some Adjustments Suggested By Students and Colleagues). I thus make no claims to follow any specific kind of didactical theory or clear hypothesis of learning styles. This is merely a description of questions I find helpful to ask when figuring out how to teach ethics in a scientific context.

The first question to ask is "Why?". Why are these students required to learn ethics as part of their education? Understanding this is a prerequisite to understand which aspects of the vast universe of ethics that are relevant. Sometimes one has the luxury of defining the "why", but often the purpose of teaching ethics has already been decided at a more distant level of administration and the task is to figure out what is relevant to reach the stated goals.

The goal can be to familiarize the students with the ethical tradition, to teach a certain code of conduct relevant to their future profession, make them better at understanding the ethical aspects of their science both in relation to the scientific process and the possible consequences or make them more able to qualify public debates on the ethical aspects of their area. These goals are not mutually exclusive, but depending on the focus, it changes the relevancy of different aspects of ethics.

To state it very briefly it is my experience that the more the goal of the ethical teaching is to enable the students to see the ethical aspects of

their own work and contribute in a qualified way to public debates, the more important it is to focus thematically on key theories and concepts and the less important it becomes to give them a understanding of either the history behind the concepts and theories or the full picture of the landscape of ethical theories. Obviously some history and names might help the students remember the basic difference between aiming for the highest welfare or respecting basic civil rights. But to the extent that it is necessary to choose, I at least find that discussing current issues of e.g. animals rights is more supportive of the learning process than a critical examination of Kant's *categorical imperative*.

Another important question to ask is "who?" Who are these persons sitting in their room and what is their academic background? A science student is not just a science student in the sense that they have knowledge of different areas and – what is even more important – are interested in different subjects. And as it is easier to engage them in ethics, if they can see the relevance to their own professional life, it is necessary to spend some time understanding the subjects that these particular students find interesting and develop cases based on that. This can be a huge challenge, as this takes a level of knowledge about their disciplines that at least I, as a bioethicist with a theological background, do not have. One option is to seek help and pretend to be on top of everything. Another, more viable solution, is to have the students help develop the cases by choosing and presenting relevant issues themselves. This also carries the benefit of making the teacher wiser at the same time – and gives the students a deeper motivation for looking at the issues through the lens of ethics.

This leads to the third question: "How?" What kind of didactical tools will be best to teach them this stuff? As already indicated the answers to the first two questions have an influence on this. The hardest task when teaching ethics in a science environment is to get the students to engage. There are often several prejudices that need to be broken down – especially concerning: (1) whether ethics is relevant at all, (2) whether values are not just subjective emotions beyond the reach of rational reflection, and (3) whether science is not value free and objective and ethics therefore not of a subject for others than those who decide how the results of science is implemented into society.

Focusing on relevant theories (utilitarianism vs. deontology vs. virtue ethics) and concepts (Who are ethically relevant? How is ethics an academic discipline? Relativism, pluralism and fundamentalism) by means of cases that are relevant to the professional knowledge of the students, seems to be a good way to get them to see that ethics is actually relevant, e.g. in the way that it is more than "opinions", but an academic discipline that can help uncover the values embedded in all scientific work and qualify the debate on the processes and consequences of their scientific education. Enabling biotechnology students to see the values embedded in risk analysis of GM-plants is one way to achieve this goal.

It is, however, often that one has to teach a mixed group of students that have different interests. Here one runs the risk of engaging only those student with expertize relevant to the specific case. To avoid alienating the others it can be a good idea to use a mix of cases so that all students at least at some point find themselves using their scientific background knowledge.

Further it can be helpful to have some cases that 'alienate' all students equally. A mixed group of science students can thus gain a lot from discussing the difference between a welfarist approach and a rights based approach to the question whether it is a duty for the

health care sector to establish contact between severely handicapped persons and prostitutes, if the former express a desire for this.

Teaching ethics to science students is difficult as the subject is foreign to most of them. Nevertheless it is a subject that is almost impossible to make irrelevant to them as ethics is part and parcel of human existence and known to them all on an existential level. Each and every one of them have experiences of right and wrong. Building on that one can then help them see how ethics is not only relevant when they interact with their friends, but also when they interact with the world as such through their science.

Most importantly, seen from my perspective, one can help open their eyes to the complex relationship between facts and values in the discussions concerning egg production animals, climate change and prioritizing within the health sector. And if it is possible to get as far as to make them see that what they took for granted was actually debatable and that those they disagree with are not necessarily stupid, ignorant and/or deaf, but merely under the influence of different values... then one might even have achieved something worthwhile.

Asking the questions “Why, Who and How” might seem banal – and so it is. But it is not trivial in the sense of unimportant, as it can help organize teaching ethics in a science environment.

Book review



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Lori Gruen (ed.), *The Ethics of Captivity*, Oxford University Press, 2014, 276 pp.

The authors

Lori Gruen is Professor of Philosophy, Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, and Environmental Studies at Wesleyan University, Connecticut, and a well-known figure in the animal ethics community. For this edited volume, she has brought together a diverse and interesting group of people in the know about conditions and ethics of both human and non-human captivity. I cannot mention all contributors here, but a few that might ring a bell with EurSafe members are Peter Sandøe, Clare Palmer, Alasdair Cochrane, and Alexandra Horowitz. Many authors have first-hand experience with captivity, for example through running animal shelters or sanctuaries, or because they have been prison inmates themselves. Heart-rending is, for example, the account by Lauren Gazzola, an animal rights and social justice activist who was sentenced to 40 months in a federal prison in Connecticut for supporting and organising non-violent action against the animal cruelty committed at the Huntingdon Life Sciences animal testing lab.

Their ambition

Despite the fact that enormous numbers of individuals, both humans and non-humans, are in captivity, there has not been much philosophical reflection so far regarding the conditions, meaning, implications, consequences, and justifications of captivity. This collection of essays aims to begin to fill this gap. It does so in two parts. The first part comprises accounts (many of them first-hand) of what captivity could mean for a variety of different animals and how it influences their lives: dogs, dolphins and whales, elephants, chimpanzees, rabbits, chickens, and humans. The second part delves deeper into the reflection on the ethics of captivity, including tensions and questions raised by captivity conditions. For example, should we

keep cats indoors for their own good? How can we justify taking their reproductive ability away from individuals? Should we allow our pets to predate on local wildlife such as mice and birds? What could count as restitution for past harms done to captive animals (is placing the animal in a sanctuary sufficient restitution?)? Should humans save non-human species even if they can only ever exist in captivity, due to the lack of a natural habitat to return to?

The results

The ambition to put the ethics of captivity on the map is definitely met by this book, as it raises many important issues for debate and shows how much reflection still needs to be done in this interesting field.

While the second part may be more interesting from a philosophical point of view, the first part really sets the stage by showing the great impact that conditions of captivity can have on individuals. It does so in an honest and heartfelt way, although sometimes reflection on the authors' own normative assumptions and worldviews is missing. For many authors it seems undisputed that all animals have a right to be free and that life in the wild would be the optimal situation for animals. In the second part, this picture is somewhat nuanced and complicated, for example by Cochrane who provides a counterpoise by arguing that domesticated animals can lead flourishing lives in captivity. His contribution perhaps provides the most food for thought and seems to run counter to some of the other contributions such as the one by Alexandra Horowitz who argues that through domestication in a certain sense dogs are captive in their own bodies, not being able to live an independent life in the wild.

Most striking

The combination of human and non-human experiences of captivity provides the book with an extra layer of reflection; it becomes clear that in many cases the conditions of captivity are similar for human and non-human animals, while it also shows some ways in which they diverge. For example, in Gruen's own very interesting contribution about the undermining effect of captivity on human and animal dignity, she argues that we should understand dignity as a relational concept. Hereby she is 'trying to capture both the contextual nature of the notion and the broader normative implications of the recognition of dignity or the failure to recognize dignity on the valuer, the community of valuers, as well as the individual whose dignity should be respected' (p. 234). This means that an individual need not experience her own captivity as disrespect for her dignity in order to still have her dignity undermined (think of the much discussed 'dwarf tossing case'). Much of what she says applies to both humans and animals, with the only difference that the condition of being continuously gazed at (by zoo visitors, by prison guards) can lead to a sense of humiliation in humans but not animals. Also, Cochrane argues that captivity as the loss of autonomy is not experienced to the same extent by humans and animals, although I doubt whether many in this book would agree with his argumentation, least of all Mariam Jones, who consistently refers to chickens as 'people'.

Reasons not to read the book

Although I would recommend this book to anyone interested in the plight of captive animals and imprisoned humans alike, I wonder whether those who still need convincing that animals have moral status would be swayed by it. The book does seem to be preaching to the converted and to take for granted that animals have liberty rights. On the other hand, especially such sceptic people should read the book, of course, as the stories in it confront the reader with the problems of confining animals and humans for our benefit, be it for production, generation of medical cures, entertainment, or societal safety.

Reasons to read the book

From start to end, this book is true to its name: it is completely captivating. In fact, while reading the story of Gazzola's imprisonment on the train I was so engrossed in it that I missed my stop! This is a book not only of theoretical interest to moral philosophers and other scholars. It also has important political and practical implications. It argues convincingly that we need to reform punishment for crimes so that it becomes more focused on rehabilitation than on incarceration. We need to seriously debate the right to exist of zoos and aquariums and to redefine policies around the entertainment industry, livestock production, and biomedical research. While none of these implications are new to the political agenda, of course, this book gives them a new impetus by approaching them from a novel perspective, namely that of the meanings of and justification for captivity.



Kate Millar

EurSafe Executive Committee Update

Welcome to the winter issue of the EurSafe newsletter. We hope all of you had a productive end to the year.

This year appears to be bringing exciting opportunities for EurSafe members, with the funding calls for the EC Horizon 2020 program in full swing and the further announcements of funding programs emerging from European Commission later this year. Information provided in the EurSafe newsletter will update you on any prominent calls.

The program and conference book for the next EurSafe Congress 2015 to be held on 28–30 May 2015, in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, is being finalised. We are delighted to report that approximately 70 extended abstract papers been received. The program will be announced shortly.

Please may I remind you that the theme for the 12th Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics, Cluj-Napoca, is "Know your food! – Food Ethics and Innovation". Further details of the program and details of the Congress theme can be found at: <http://eursafe2015.usamvcluj.ro/>. If you have any questions please contact the EurSafe 2015 Secretariat at: Department of Economic Sciences (Office: +40 (264) 596384 ext. 380; Fax: +40 (264) 593792 or by e-mail: eursafe2015@usamvcluj.ro).

Please also note that the EurSafe Executive Committee will be holding the annual meeting at the end of March (30 March 2015, Utrecht), so please contact one of the EurSafe Executive Officers if have any items that you would like to raise and see discussed.

We wish you a very productive start to this year and we are all very much looking forward to seeing you in May at the next EurSafe Congress in Romania.

**Kate Millar on behalf of the Executive Board
January 2015**



Books and Publications

Critical Animal Geographies: Politics, Intersections and Hierarchies in a Multispecies World

Authors: Kathryn A. Gillespie, Rosemary-Claire Collard (eds.)

Hardcopy: 256 pages

Publisher: Routledge Chapman & Hall (Feb 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1138791504

ISBN-13: 978-1138791503

Critical Animal Studies. Thinking the Unthinkable

John Sorenson (eds.)

Paperback: 346 pages

Publisher: Canadian Scholars' Press (May 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1551305631

ISBN-13: 978-1551305639

The Rise of Critical Animal Studies: From the Margins to the Centre

Authors: Nik Taylor, Richard Twine (eds.)

Paperback: 307 pages

Publisher: Routledge; (March 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0415858577

ISBN-13: 978-0415858571

Defining Critical Animal Studies: An intersectional Social Justice Approach for Liberation

Authors: Anthony C. Nocella, Atsuko Matsuoka, Atsuko Matsuoka, John Sorenson (eds.)

Paperback: 241 pages

Publisher: Lang (Dec 2013)

Language: Englisch

ISBN-10: 1433121360

ISBN-13: 978-1433121364

Critical Animal Studies: An Introduction

Author: Dawne MacCance

Paperback: 202 pages

Publisher: State University of New York Press (Januar 2013)

Language: Englisch

ISBN-10: 1438445342

ISBN-13: 978-1438445342

Journal of Critical Animal Studies

Editors: Lindgren Johnson, Susan Thomas

Open-access, free online journal, peer-reviewed

ISSN: 1948-352X

<http://www.criticalanimalstudies.org/archives/>

Handbook of Neuroethics:

Authors: Jens Clausen, Neil Levy (eds.)

Hardcopy: 1850 pages

Publisher: Springer (Nov 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9400747063

ISBN-13: 978-9400747067



March 19–21

Conferences and Symposia

2nd Biennial Conference on Living with Animals: Interconnections

Kentucky, USA

<http://www.livingwithanimals.eku.edu/>

March 23-25

Tier – Mensch – Verhalten

Kassel, Germany

<https://www.uni-kassel.de/projekte/tier-mensch-gesellschaft/aktuelles/veranstaltungen.html>

March 27-28

Workshop on Feeding Cities: Ethical and Policy Issues in Urban Food Systems,

Boston, USA

<http://nuweb9.neu.edu/foodsystems/activities/workshop/>

April 9-10

Ethics and/or Politics: Approaching the Issues Concerning Nonhuman Animals

Birmingham, UK

<http://savingnonhumansbham2015.github.io/>

May 1- October 31

EXPO Milano 2015 Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life

Milan, Italy

<http://www.expo2015.org/en>

May 27-29

12th Congress of the European Society for Agricultural and Food Ethics

Cluj-Napoca, Romania

<http://eursafe2015.usamvcluj.ro/>

June 12-13

Animal Agency

Erlangen, Germany

www.kunstpalais.de

June 20-21

Minding Animals Germany Symposium

Munich, Germany

<http://www.mindinganimals.de/News.html>

July 12-15

Australian Animals Study Group (AASG) conference: Animal Publics: Emotions, Empathy, Activism Conference

Melbourne, Australia

<http://humananimal.arts.unimelb.edu.au/event/animal-publics-emotions-empathy-activism-conference>

July 23-25

Environmental Ethics between Action and Reflection

Kiel, Germany

<http://www.isee2015.uni-kiel.de/iseehalt/Conference-General.php>

August 18-21

XXVI European Society for Rural Sociology Places of Possibility: Rural Societies in a Neo Liberal World

Aberdeen, UK

	http://www.esrs2015.eu/
September 7-10	The 5th International Symposium for Farming Systems Design: Multi-functional farming systems in a changing world Montpellier, France http://fsd5.european-agronomy.org/
September 14-17	49th Congress of the International Society of Applied Ethology (ISAE) Sapporo Hokkaido, Japan http://www.jsaab.org/isae2015/index.html
September 17-19	Animals in the Anthropocene. Human–animal relations in a changing semiosphere Stavanger, Norway http://www.uis.no/research-and-phd-studies/research-areas/society-culture-and-religion/animals-in-changing-environments/2015-conference/
September 17-19	Vethics for vets - ethics for veterinary officers. Public Symposium Vienna, Austria http://www.vetmeduni.ac.at/de/messerli/forschung/forschung-ethik/projekte/vethics/
October 6-7	Human and Nonhuman Animals: Liberation, History and Critical Animal Studies – Fourth European Conference of Critical Animal Studies Lisabon, Portugal http://animalsconferencelisbon.blogspot.pt/p/home.html

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You are kindly invited to send any relevant contributions, conference calls, publication reviews, etc. to the editors.